

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00 ICAE-00

CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01

SP-02 SS-15 HA-05 AID-05 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /063 W

-----021989 062024Z /47

O R 061955Z APR 78

FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 234

INFO AMEMBASSY LIMA

AMEMBASSY QUITO

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCOSO J2 QUARRY HEIGHTS CZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 2790

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, BL

SUBJECT: SHIFTING ALIGNMENT OF FORCES IN THE WAKE OF MILITARY
RATIFICATION OF BOLIVIAN ELECTIONS

REF: LA PAZ 2753

1. DESPITE THE BOLIVIAN MILITARY'S REAFFIRMATION OF SUPPORT FOR
A RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT THROUGH ELECTIONS ON
JULY 9 (REFTEL) THE BREACH BETWEEN PRESIDENT BANZER AND JUAN
PEREDA IS BECOMING MORE APPARENT. IN A TELEVISED INTERVIEW
FOLLOWING THE MILITARY ANNOUNCEMENT, A TIRED AND WAN LOOKING
BANZER TOLD REPORTERS THAT BOLIVIAN MILITARY SUPPORT WOULD NOW
BE DIRECTED TOWARD "ALL THOSE CANDIDATES WHO REPRESENT NATIONAL-
ISM," ADDING THAT TO THE EXTENT THAT PEREDA REPRESENTED NAT-
IONALISM IT WOULD BE LOGICAL FOR HIM TO RECEIVE SUCH SUPPORT.

2. PEREDA ADVISED P/ECOUNS THE SAME DAY THAT BANZER HAD TOLD
HIM THE GOVERNMENT WOULD PROVIDE NO FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR
PEREDA'S CAMPAIGN BECAUSE OF BUDGET RESTRICTIONS. (EMBASSY IS
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AWARE THAT PEREDA'S CAMPAIGN RAN OUT OF FUNDS SEVERAL WEEKS
AGO AND CAMPAIGN EMPLOYEES HAVE NOT BEEN PAID FOR MARCH.)
THEREFORE, DESPITE HIS SATISFACTION WITH THE ARMED FORCES'
DECISION, WHICH HE AND HIS ADVISERS INTERPRET AS AN
INDICATION OF THE MILITARY COALESCING BEHIND HIS CANDIDACY,
PEREDA IS CONCERNED ABOUT HIS ABILITY TO CARRY FORWARD WITHOUT
GOVERNMENT FINANCING. PEREDA SAID HIS IS LAUNCHING A CAMPAIGN

TO SEEK FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM VARIOUS NON-GOB SOURCES.

3. THE PEREDA CAMPAIGN IS ALSO CONCERNED THAT BANZER MAY CONTINUE HIS EFFORTS TO POSTPONE OR CANCEL ELECTIONS, BUT UNCLEAR AS TO BANZER'S NEXT PLOY. PEREDA'S ADVISERS JAVIER ARCE AND EDWIN TAPIA (PREVIOUSLY LONG-TIME BANZER COHORTS) EXPRESS DOUBT THAT BANZER WILL ACT AGAINST PEREDA, EITHER INDIRECTLY OR BY CONDONING PERSONAL ATTACKS ON HIM. THIS MAY BE WHISTLING IN THE DARK.

4. DESPITE HIS FINANCIAL CONCERNS AND WORRYING ABOUT BANZER'S NEXT MOVE, PEREDA'S POSITION SEEMS TO US TO HAVE STRENGTHENED, AND BANZER'S WEAKENED. THE ARMED FORCES OBVIOUSLY REACHED THEIR DECISION IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT IT WOULD KEEP PEREDA'S CAMPAIGN ALIVE. ALSO, THE FSB PARTY NOW SEEMS TO BE SHIFTING IN THE DIRECTION OF SUPPORTING PEREDA. FSB LEADER MARIO GUTIERREZ TOLD THE PRESS APRIL 3 THAT BANZER WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS (GUTIERREZ') VISIT TO VICTOR PAZ TO DISCUSS RENEWAL OF THE FSB-MNR-MILITARY ALLIANCE AND THAT GUTIERREZ ONLY DID IT AS A LOYAL BOLIVIAN. BANZER AMBIGUOUSLY OWNED UP TO A ROLE IN GUTIERREZ' VISIT TO PAZ, JUSTIFYING IT AS IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST. HAVING FIXED THE BLAME ON BANZER, GUTIERREZ MAY NOW FEEL BETTER ABLE TO REACH AN ACCORD WITH PEREDA.

5. COMMNET. IT IS CLEAR THAT THE ARMED FORCES VALIDATION OF ELECTIONS HAS CHANGED THE ALIGNMENT OF FORCES SIGNIFICANTLY. CONFIDENTIAL

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BANZER HAS SUFFERED A SIGNIFICANT SETBACK AT THE HANDS OF THE MILITARY. PEREDA IS STILL ALIVE, BUT IN FINANCIAL TROUBLE. AND AS A SIDESHOW, THE STILL-FRACTURED OPPOSITION PARTIES ARE ALREADY REASSESSING THEIR OWN PROSPECTS AND ALIGNMENTS IN THE WAKE OF THE ARMED FORCES DECISION.
BOEKER

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